City of Seattle

Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3023696
Address:	622 Rainier Avenue S.
Applicant:	Jeff Walls, Studio 19 Architects
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, September 27, 2016
Board Members Present:	Carey Dagliano Holmes (Chair) Sharon Khosla Charles Romero David Sauvion
Board Members Absent:	Julian Weber (recused)
SDCI Staff Present:	David L. Landry, AICP, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	NC2-65 (Neighborhood Commercial 2)
Nearby Zones:	North – NC2-65 South – NC2-65 East – LR-3 West - LR3 RC, NC2-40
Overlay:	Residential Urban Village Frequent Transit Service Area
Project Area:	32,051 square feet (sq. ft.)

Current Development:

The trapezoidal shaped site is surrounded on all four side by two way streets; Rainier Ave to the west, 16th Ave S to the east, S. Weller Street to the north and S. Dearborn St. to the south. The site is located in the Atlantic Neighborhood of the Central District of the Rainier Valley. The

Atlantic neighborhood is part of Seattle's oldest residential neighborhoods. The south one half of the site is currently occupied by an "L-shaped" brick masonry building built in 1923 and used recently as a printing company. The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods has requested that the existing structure shall be submitted for landmark nomination. A landmark nomination for the building is being prepared by the applicant and pending review by the Landmarks Preservation Board. The northern one half of the site is currently used as an unpaved parking area.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The area is a neighborhood in transition with a number of social service agencies and a variety of housing stock including new homes, condominiums, and renovated vintage homes. Other uses around the proposal site consist of the Japanese Cultural center to the north, light industrial manufacturing to the east, a number of new townhouses to the southeast, commercial retail establishments directly to the south, consisting primarily of eating establishments, and a Goodwill Job Training & Education Center at the southwest corner of S. Dearborn and Rainier Ave S.

Access:

Primary vehicular access to the site is north off of S. Lane St at a lower entry located just to the east of the building or west off of 16th Ave S via a mid-block walkway/driveway to an upper level unpaved parking area. Pedestrian access is east into an entry located near the northeast corner of Rainier Ave S. and S. Lane St. or west off of 16th along the walkway/driveway.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

The site is not located in an Environmentally Critical Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a proposal is to construct a six story, (with some of the building height limited to 5 stories) apartment building containing 200 units and retail space at ground level. Parking for 160 vehicles to be provided. Existing structure to be demolished.

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3023696) at the following website:
http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCI:

Mailing Address: Public Resource Center

700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE September 27, 2016

PUBLIC COMMENT

At the EDG meeting, the following comments were provided:

- Asked if the design team considered working with the existing building instead of removing completely.
- Supported the preferred massing option but suggested that the foot bridges need to stay open.
- Asked about the retail on the back side of the building and whether or not it would be viable.
- Supported the idea that the internal court yard will be an open public space but was wondering how light will enter into the spaces.
- Encouraged a better transition to the neighborhood at the northwest corner.
- Suggested that an additional crosswalk at the corner of S. Lane St. and Rainier to complement the one located at South Weller St. and Rainer Ave to the north.
- Suggested that in the evening times the people will be using the roof top deck and therefore it should be reoriented toward prominent views of Mt. Rainier or downtown Seattle.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE September 27, 2016

1. **Massing Options:** The Board was generally supportive of the preferred massing option (Concept 3) as being courageous and distinct:
    - **a.** The Board was concerned about how close the building structure is in relationship to Rainier Ave., and suggested that the mass be pushed back (*eastward*) to provide a more comfortable space against this busy arterial. **(CS2-B, CS3-A, PL1-B)**
    - **b.** The Board liked how the massing in the preferred option broke up the building into 3 distinct shapes, but thought that the ground level still appeared like one building mass. Therefore, the Board wanted to see how

portions of the building could be stepped to reduce the feeling of one large building, especially as perceived from the residential side. **(CS2-B)**

c. The Board wanted to get a better understanding of how the proposed building masses would transition sensitively to the adjacent existing buildings and zones. (**PL3-C)**

2. Ground Level Use and Entries:

a. The Board was concerned as to how the ground level spaces for Option Three will be used as it has such a significant ground plane. **(CS2-C, CS2-D)**

b. The Board stated that they would like to see the residential entry more engaged with the public realm which could be further expressed in the massing. **(PL3-A)**

c. The Board was concerned about the closeness of the building to Rainier and suggested that the building be pushed back and more ground given over to the side walk space, especially at the retail corner which could be made more open. **PL1-B, PL3-C, CS2-B)PL1-B, PL3-C, CS2-B)**

d. The Board wanted the design team to consider further modulating the building exterior along the eastern portion of the building. **(CS2-D, CS2-C, DC2-A)**

e. The Board also suggested eroding the northeast corner of the building to activate the proposed retail corner. **(DC2-C, CS2-B)**

3. Cultural Influences:

a. The Board agreed that they would like to see a design that embraces the local cultural influences and history in the building's design elements. **(CS3-A, CS3-B)**

b. The Board suggested that the proposed bridge elements could be used to anchor cultural references**. (CS3-B)**

4. Building Scale: The Board was interested in seeing portions of the building reduced in height or stepped back at the upper floors of the building to provide a more sensitive transition to the adjacent zones. **(CS2-C, CS2-D)**

5. Amenity Spaces:

a. The Board was generally supportive of a proposed roof top green space but agreed with public comment that there were other opportunities for this space to be configured to take advantage of prominent views to the city. **(PL1-A, DC3-B)**

b. The Board wanted the design team to return with a full landscape plan depicting the layout and what it should look like. **(DC4-D)**

6. Courtyard: The Board stated that the central courtyard and catwalks create a type of sacred space but echoed public concerns that the bridge elements might reduce the solar access to and compromise the quality of the open spaces below. **(DC4-C)**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, there were no departures requested.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B. SUNLIGHT AND NATURAL VENTILATION

CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation available onsite where possible. Use local wind patterns and solar gain as a means of reducing the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on the site.

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-B. ADJACENT SITES, STREETS, AND OPEN SPACES

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and carefully consider how the building will interact with the public realm. Consider the qualities and character of the streetscape— its physical features (sidewalk, parking, landscape strip, street trees, travel lanes, and other amenities) and its function (major retail street or quieter residential street)—in siting and designing the building.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces. Evaluate adjacent sites, streetscapes, trees and vegetation, and open spaces for how they function as the walls and floor of outdoor spaces or "rooms" for public use. Determine how best to support those spaces through project siting and design (e.g. using mature trees to frame views of architecture or other prominent features).

CS2-C TOPOGRAPHY

CS2-C-1. Land Form: Use the natural topography and/or other desirable land forms or features to inform the project design.

CS2-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site. Consider "stepping up or down" hillsides to accommodate significant changes in elevation.

CS2-D HEIGHT, BULK, AND SCALE

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A. EMPHASIZING POSITIVE NEIGHBORHOOD ATTRIBUTES

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-B. ADJACENT SITES, STREETS, AND OPEN SPACES

CS3-B-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

CS3-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and carefully consider how the building will interact with the public realm. Consider the qualities and character of the streetscape— its physical features (sidewalk, parking, landscape strip, street trees, travel lanes, and other amenities) and its function (major retail street or quieter residential street)—in siting and designing the building.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-A. NETWORK OF OPEN SPACES

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood. Consider ways that design can enhance the features and activities of existing off-site open spaces. Open space may include sidewalks, streets and alleys, circulation routes and other open areas of all kinds

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and/or quality of project-related open space available for public life. Consider features such as widened sidewalks, recessed entries, curb bulbs, courtyards, plazas, or through-block connections, along with place-making elements such as trees, landscape, art, or other amenities, in addition to the pedestrian amenities listed in PL1.B3.

PL1-B. WALKWAYS AND CONNECTIONS

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered. Visible access to the building's entry should be provided. Examples of pedestrian amenities include seating, other street furniture, lighting, year-round landscaping, seasonal plantings, pedestrian scale signage, site furniture, art work, awnings, large storefront windows, and engaging retail displays and/or kiosks.

PL1-C. OUTDOOR USES AND ACTIVITIES

PL2-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL2-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL2-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety. These may include:

a. seasonal plantings or displays and/or water features;
b. outdoor heaters;
c. overhead weather protection;
d. ample, moveable seating and tables and opportunities for outdoor dining;
e. an extra level of pedestrian lighting;
f. trees for moderate weather protection and shade; and/or
g. 24-hour wi-fi service.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A. ENTRIES

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street. Scale and detail them to function well for their anticipated use and also to fit with the building of which they are a part, differentiating residential and commercial entries with design features and amenities specific to each.

a. Office/commercial lobbies should be visually connected to the street through the primary entry and sized to accommodate the range and volume of foot traffic anticipated;
b. Retail entries should include adequate space for several patrons to enter and exit simultaneously, preferably under cover from weather.
c. Common entries to multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors. Design features emphasizing the entry as a semi-private space are recommended and may be accomplished through signage, low walls and/or landscaping, a recessed entry area, and other detailing that signals a break from the public sidewalk.
d. Individual entries to ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry. The design should contribute to a sense of identity, opportunity for personalization, offer privacy, and emphasize personal safety and security for building occupants.

PL3-B RESIDENTIAL EDGES

PL3-B-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-B-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-B-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

PL3-C RETAIL EDGES

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A. MASSING

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects. Consider creating recesses or indentations in the building envelope; adding balconies, bay windows, porches, canopies or other elements; and/or highlighting building entries.

DC2-B. RCHITECTURAL AND FAÇADE COMPOSITION

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades including alleys and visible roofs considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned through the placement and detailing of all elements, including bays, fenestration, and materials, and any patterns created by their arrangement. On sites that abut an alley, design the alley façade and its connection to the street carefully. At a minimum, consider wrapping the treatment of the street-facing façade around the alley corner of the building

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians. These may include:

a. newsstands, ticket booths and flower shops (even if small or narrow);
b. green walls, landscaped areas or raised planters;
c. wall setbacks or other indentations;
d. display windows; trellises or other secondary elements;
e. art as appropriate to area zoning and uses; and/or
f. terraces and landscaping where retaining walls above eye level are unavoidable

DC2-C. SECONDARY ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas). Detailing may include features such as distinctive door and window hardware, projecting window sills, ornamental tile or metal, and other high-quality surface materials and finishes.

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose—adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions. Examples include shading devices and windows that add rhythm and depth as well as contribute toward energy efficiency and/or savings or canopies that provide street-level

scale and detail while also offering weather protection. Where these elements are prominent design features, the quality of the materials is critical.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors, such as:

a. considering aspects of neighboring buildings through architectural style, roof line, datum line detailing, fenestration, color or materials,
b. using trees and landscaping to enhance the building design and fit with the surrounding context, and/or
c. creating a well-proportioned base, middle and top to the building in locations where this might be appropriate. Consider how surrounding buildings have addressed base, middle, and top, and whether those solutions or similar ones might be a good fit for the project and its context.

DC2-D. SCALE AND TEXTURE

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept. Pay special attention to the first three floors of the building in order to maximize opportunities to engage the pedestrian and enable an active and vibrant street front.

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or "texture," particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E. FORM AND FUNCTION

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

DC3-B. OPEN SPACE USES AND ACTIVITIES

DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs: Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions: Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities. For example, place outdoor seating and gathering areas where there is sunny exposure and shelter from wind. Build flexibility into the design in order to accommodate changes as needed; e.g. a south-facing courtyard that is ideal in spring may become too hot in summer, necessitating a shift of outdoor furniture to a shadier location for the season.

DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space: Site and design project-related open spaces should connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public

open space where appropriate. Look for opportunities to sup-port uses and activities on adjacent properties and/or the sidewalk.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A BUILDING MATERIALS

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions. Highly visible features, such as balconies, grilles and railings should be especially attractive, well-crafted and easy to maintain. Pay particular attention to environments that create harsh conditions that may require special materials and details, such as marine areas or open or exposed sites.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.